

The Atari Times

September/October 1996

We're on the Web!

By Greg George

You may be reading this thinking, "Wow. I thought I had seen the last issue of *The Atari Times*!" Well, these past two months have been quite daunting for your humble editor. I've been away on trips, classes have started up again, work has been crazy, and I still have to find time for my girlfriend! Oh, and did I mention I'm a terrible procrastinator? Well...

Another thing slowing down this issue was my lack of ideas for this column. I feel this should be a commentary on whatever Atari issue I can think of. And with Atari closing up shop, it gets harder to think of new ideas. So, you may see this commentary shrinking down and allowing room for other articles. And since I'm at a loss as to what to write about this month, I'm just going to ramble.

The Atari Times On The Web

The past few days have been really interesting as I have been putting my web page together. A few months ago, my co-worker, George Henson, (who is teaching me the ins and outs of both HTML and Linux.) informed me that I had a web page on our schools web server. So naturally, I immediately took a look at it, and discovered how extremely dull it was. It simply read, "Welcome to Greg's Homepage." How boring! But as days slipped past and work piled up, building the web page got put on

the back burner.

Last week, I somehow got back into the web stuff. (I really just needed to "get in the mood.") Already deciding to put *The Atari Times* on the web, I started going through my back issue files. I was originally going to put them up without HTMLizing them at all, but figured it wouldn't take much effort to stick some code in the text.

I quickly found out how fun it was adding those codes in and seeing how CAB & Netscape interpreted them. I added lines, pictures, links, backgrounds (thanks Tony!), tables... The list goes on. Who knows what I'll get into next! I'm scared!

Anyhow, if you've got access to the web, give my page a shot! The url is:
<http://www.polk.cc.fl.us/~greg/>

Some Sad News

As many of us know, there's been some sad news in the Atari world recently. To the chagrin of many of us, the merger with JTS finally went through and Atari is no longer an entity unto itself. Now, it's a subdivision (a bit demeaning for the company that created the video game) of JTS with a whopping 4 employees. What does that mean for us Jaguar owners? You didn't expect to see any Jaguar games released by JTS did you?

In addition to the Jag software drying up, Don Thomas has left Atari to be employed for Sony. While I wish him well, I can't help but feel sadness at his departure. I'm

sure many of you feel the same.

On the bright side, *Towers II* does have a release month of October. Be sure to thank Telegames by purchasing a copy. I know I will! Also, *BattleSphere* is STILL on the release list as is *Worms*. These will probably be the last Jaguar games and each of them are worthy of our dollars. Heck, I'm going to buy another Jaguar and TWO copies of *BattleSphere*!

You're probably asking yourself, "But where can I buy these games?" Well, let me tell you who I plan to buy them from: Toad Computers of Severna Park, Maryland (USA). From Jaguar to Lynx to ST to 8-bit, they literally have *everything* for your Atari! For info call: (410) 544-6943 or (800) 448-8623 for orders. (BTW, this is an UNSolicited ad! Tell 'em you read it in *The Atari Times*!)

That's all the commentary I want to write for this issue. I hope you enjoy it and we'll be seeing you on the 'net!!

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Tony "Stosser"
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BattleZone 2000 Cheat

Eric Ginner Interview

The Atari Times #5 Sept./Oct., 1996

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Shareware Notice!

You may be saying to yourself, "Wow! This newsletter is great! It's informative, fun to read, and positive. But how can I encourage Greg to keep sending it to us loyal Atarians?" Well, I'll let you know with one word: CASH.

This publication is totally free. You aren't obligated to send me anything. However, without you, there would be no free publication. I need your help!

This newsletter takes a lot of money and effort to produce. But there are people such as Todd Yuen who see the value of having an Atari-only newsletter delivered to their door. Todd, the readers (and myself) thank you.

So do it for your fellow Atarians. Do it for yourself. But most of all, do it for me! Support the shareware idea! Send money today!!

Jaguar Games List

It's back! The complete listing of Jaguar games. I've decided to remove SkyHammer from the list since no one has been able to find it yet. When I have the opportunity to buy it, I'll put it back on the list. Until then, remember, Avg is an average rating by TR (Total Reviewers). ATR is any review you might find in this newsletter. It'll be done someday!!

Title	Avg	TR	ATR
1. Tempest 2000	94	5	-
2. Rayman	91	4	92
3. NBA Jam TE	90	1	-
4. Alien vs. Predator	86	5	-
5. Iron Soldier	83	5	-
6. Battlemorph CD	80	3	-
7. Syndicate	78	3	-
8. Cybermorph	76	5	-
9. Myst CD	76	1	-
10. Cannon Fodder	75	3	-
11. Zool 2	75	4	-
12. Defender 2000	74	4	75
13. Pitfall	74	4	64
14. Primal Rage CD	74	2	-
15. Ultra Vortek	74	4	-
16. Doom	73	3	-
17. Fight For Life	73	1	73
18. Baldies CD	72	3	-
19. Braindead 13 CD	70	1	70
20. FlipOut!	70	2	-
21. Highlander CD	70	2	-
22. White Men Can't Jump	70	2	-
23. Brutal Sports Football	68	4	-
24. Evolution Dino-Dudes	68	3	-
25. Raiden	68	4	-
26. Super Burnout	67	3	81
27. Atari Karts	65	2	-
28. Blue Lightning CD	65	4	-
29. Power Drive Rally	65	2	-
30. VidGrid CD	65	2	-
31. Wolfenstein 3D	64	3	-
32. Dragon	62	4	-
33. Zoop	62	2	-
34. Dragon's Lair CD	60	2	-
35. Fever Pitch Soccer	60	1	-
36. Flashback	60	2	-
37. Hover Strike CD	60	2	-
38. Int. Sensible Soccer	60	1	-
39. Missile Command 3D	60	3	-
40. Pinball Fantasies	60	1	-
41. Val d'Isere Skiing...	59	3	-
42. Bubsy	58	3	-
43. Theme Park	58	4	-
44. Hover Strike	55	2	-
45. Club Drive	52	4	-
46. Troy Aikman Football	50	2	-
47. Crescent Galaxy	48	3	-
48. Kasumi Ninja	48	3	-
49. Checkered Flag	47	4	-
50. Ruiner Pinball	40	2	20
51. I-War	40	2	-
52. Supercross 3D	37	3	-
53. Double Dragon V	35	2	-
54. Attack/Mutant Penguins	--	0	-
55. Space Ace CD	--	0	-

Newsline...

Don Thomas Resigns

By Don Thomas

You may like to know that I have submitted my resignation to Atari and have determined that Thursday, August 15 will be my final day.

I have been at Atari since November 1989. I helped launch the Portfolio, which enjoyed tremendous success early in it's life cycle. Later, I took on the role as a specialist and helped represent Portfolio technology at specialty trade shows, key account presentations and in exclusive development scenarios. More recently, I have streamlined an effective customer service department pursuant to the resources afforded by corporate direction. During much of this time, I have made every effort to be accessible and active on CompuServe as well as GENie, Prodigy, our Web Site and a BBS I sustained privately in my home.

Prior to Atari, I worked at Federated Electronics stores and was known within the organization for my prejudice for Atari brand computers and games. Much of my software library was provided to Federated as samples and the software buyer asked me to test the latest titles.

I purchased my first Atari product in the early 80's. The 2600 was financed on my First Visa Card from a Video Concept store in Dallas, Texas. I was so impressed with the technology that I taught myself programming and developed a newspaper delivery game to present to my employer, the Dallas Times Herald, long before Paperboy ever hit the coin-op arcades. Only the crash of the video game industry in the mid 80's kept

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New Atari Magazine!

Mike Kerslake, a magazine publisher with over fifteen years experience has signed up Frank Charlton, ex features editor for *ST Format* and Joe Connor, ex Reader Disk/Public Arena editor for *Atari World* as joint editors for a NEW printed Atari magazine called *Atari Computing*.

The launch issue of *Atari Computing* will feature sixty A4 pages crammed with quality editorial. We're delighted to welcome contributions from respected and well known journalists including Graeme Rutt, Jon Ellis, Denesh Bhabuta and Kev Beardsworth.

We're delighted to announce we've signed a deal with the two leading disk based magazines, *AtariPhile* and *Maggie* to publish regular sections within the magazine. If you've never seen a disk magazine before we think you'll be amazed to find out what you've been missing!

The launch issue will be on sale at the forthcoming Atari shows so why not attend and meet us? The shows will be held on Saturday September 28th in Birmingham and Sunday September 29th in London, for more details about the shows contact: Goodman International, Telephone: +44 (0)1782 335650.

Apart from a darn good read the other thing most of us like is some new software to play with. The Reader Disk concept offers all readers the chance to get their hands on the hottest new software around along with exclusive versions not available anywhere else. We intend to offer one Reader Disk to accompany each issue, buy it or not, the choice is yours!

What we need, now more than

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Jag Shareware Update

By Brian C Bessemer

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The Underground has solicited the help of a few (maybe not so few) industry professionals.

They have also secured a source with lists of information, including all companies that have the ability to produce Jag carts.

Certain members are involved in a very large project, but are awaiting legal authorization before releasing the title, etc.

For any specifics I might be able to share with you, just e-mail me...

Digital Antic Project

By Kevin Savetz

savetz@northcoast.com

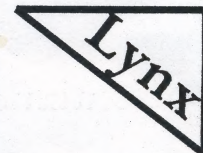
I am happy to announce the launch of the *Digital Antic Project*. *Antic* magazine was the premiere magazine devoted to 8-bit Atari computers. *Antic*, like the 8-bit Atari, has been forgotten by all but a small minority...

The *Digital Antic Project* is a small crusade to put all of the old issues of *Antic* (and eventually its sister magazine, *STart*) on the Internet. I have received permission from the publisher of *Antic* to make the material available on the Internet for free.

The site features the complete text of the early issues, as well as cover art and memorable ads from the magazine. More material will be added as time permits faster if YOU volunteer to help by scanning, HTMLizing, or proofreading.

The site is at:
<http://www.northcoast.com/savetz/antic/dap.html>

Interview with Eric Ginner



By Ed Castle

If you own a Lynx, you probably own one or more of his games. He's worked on Checkered Flag, probably the second most popular Lynx game behind Blue Lightning. He brought the Lady Pac-Man to the small screen and shocked the video game world with the first version of Batman Returns. He's also worked on excellent brain-teasers like Shanghai and Rampart. So, without further delay, (I'm filling space. Can you tell?) here's Ed Castle's interview with Lynx programmer, Eric Ginner.

What games have you worked on?

I programmed Ms. Pacman, Shanghai, Checkered Flag, Rampart, Batman Returns for the Lynx. I was also involved in testing a lot of the early Lynx games.

Which was/is your favorite (to play, and to program) and why?

I like playing Robotron, mostly because I just like shoot em ups in general. I also like Shanghai because it gives you the feeling that you can improve each time you play.

Which game took you longest to finish programming?

Probably Checkered Flag, since it was a half finished project when I started working on it. A bunch of time was spent trying to continue it, then I ended up starting over because it would be more efficient. Batman also took quite awhile because we had to try to make it somewhat like the movie.

Are there any interesting secrets in the games?

Rampart: Pause, then press opt1 17 times, opt2 9 times, A 11 times, B 23 times once that is done, you can pause, then do one of these:

Right - conquer the next battle
Left - conquer the next battle and go to the victory screen
Up - set timer to 30
Down - give each player 7 cannons

Ms. Pacman: Pause, AAB, gives you turbo speed

You worked with many different people, was there anyone in particular you remember/liked? (Say who)

Who (you told me to say it!) Yes, Jerome Strach.

If yes, why?

We started doing Ms. Pacman as a way to learn about programming the Lynx and also to get some experience in programming games. We ended up working on 5 Lynx games together. It was very helpful to have another person to bounce ideas off of, solve problems, do experiments, etc. It made learning all the new stuff a lot easier and a lot more fun. We also could impress each other by putting weird stuff into our games, like strange sound effects, graphics, etc.

Which game was the hardest for you to develop? Why?

Checkered Flag. It was the first game I did as a full time programmer. It was also the first game that I didn't voluntarily choose to do. Before Checkered Flag, I did Ms. Pacman and

Shanghai. I was going to make those games just for fun because I liked them, they were fairly easy to do. Getting the multiplayer stuff to work was somewhat of a challenge, but also a lot of fun.

Which is your favourite Lynx game?

Robotron

Other favorites:
Rampart
Shanghai
Chips Challenge
Slime World
Zarlol Mercenary

Who's idea was it to put the billboards up like that in Checkered Flag, yours or Atari's :)?

We just copied the idea from Pole Position. For the most part, we could decide on our own what went into our games. Atari never did have much in the way of 'games' people except for the testers, so just about all of the good ideas were our own or came from the testers.

Do you know anything interesting we'd all love to know about the Lynx?

Hmmmm, can't think of anything really interesting. There was a thing that let you hook up a Lynx to a TV and see the video on the TV screen. There were some plans to do a really small version of the Lynx, but it never happened. The development system was great. You could get a basic game structure working in a day and could do a complete game in a few months.

Atari Computing

Continued from page 3

ever before, is your support. It's going to be tough to keep going so we're initially planning bi-monthly releases -but this could change, it's really up to you! Instead of wishing us luck post a cheque to reserve your copy today!

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With Disk - £ 15.00

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Magazine Only - £ 10.00
With Disk - £ 16.00

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Link o' The Month

Many Atarians are on the internet these days. Ok, so we're probably using some lousy PC or Mac rather than our beloved STs. (I'd gladly use STiK & CAB for my internetting if only it had PPP support. Hello? Anyone out there?)

Anyway, you'd probably be surprised to learn that there are more Atari sites than there are Sega, Sony, or 3DO sites! Only Nintendo has more, and only by a small margin. To find all these great Atari sites be sure to check out Mr. Dan Brown's page at <http://www.ior.com/~danbrown/>

Dan, I love it! Great work!

Don Thomas - continued from page 3

me from entering the industry during those years.

My first computer was the TI99/4a and, later, the Commodore 64. But it wasn't until I opened an Atari 400 box in my apartment that I developed a passion and soon found myself hoarding every cool thing I could find. From Scott Adam's adventures to my MPP1000c modem and Rana disk drives, I was virtually possessed.

After the Tramiels took over Atari, I bought into their 16-bit computer line hook, line and sinker.... and never regretted a single moment.

When the Tramiels acquired Federated in the late 80's, I thought I died and went to heaven. For the first time, I met the likes of Neil Harris and Mr. Jack Tramiel himself. During the day, I helped expand Atari exposure in Atari's new chain of electronic stores. At night I honed my programming skills into a line of software I called Artisan Software. I successfully, released a total of 5 titles under that label, all for Atari 16-bit computers.

In 1989, Atari was compelled to discontinue Federated operations and my career became a casualty in Jack's business war. While seeking employment anywhere I could, I dedicated time and energies into the Atari Revolution... a grass roots movement dedicated to foster word-of-mouth for Atari's fine line of products. In November, Atari hired me back and I met Bob Brodie, Frank Foster and a brigade of personalities who have long left a permanent mark in the historical remembrances of the world's longest surviving home computer/video game company.

On August 26, I will be joining the professionals at Sony Computer Entertainment. As you undoubtedly know, the Sony Playstation is America's number one choice in next generation

technology. After examining the opportunities that are out there, the PSX looks to me to be the most promising long term video game investment and I am proud to become part of the PSX team.

Atari, the name and the products is directly responsible for so many things in my life. Inclusive are personal development and the acquisition lifelong friends. The Tramiel family is equally responsible for having enriched my life with wisdoms that I will forever value. There will always be a special part of my heart for Atari. There will always be an envy that I wasn't there during more glorious days and always I will take pride in knowing that I worked my hardest during Atari's most difficult times.

As you undoubtedly know, Atari has just completed a merger with JTS; a reputable supplier of hard disk drive technologies. The terms of the merger relegates Atari as a division of JTS and no longer is Atari an independent corporate entity. Shares of stock are now traded by the symbol JTS. Atari's staff as of next week will consist effectively of 4 people; all of which are among the most proud and honorable I have ever known.

On behalf of Atari, past and present, thank you to everyone who supported us. Atari will always be an institution in our hearts remembering the evolution of **Pong, Asteroids, Star Raiders, Major Havoc, Millipede** and many more. Look for Atari's afterlife in licensed titles for other systems.

I have every intention to continue frequenting the Atari support areas and you will no doubt find me popping up in a PSX forum near you! I'll look forward to seeing you there.

Don Thomas @ Atari

Struggle To Live

By Greg George

It seems like all new game systems are judged by its 3D fighting game. The Saturn has the **Virtua Fighter** games and the PSX has **Toshinden** and **Tekken**. But what does the Jaguar have? **Fight For Life**. A tedious 3D fighting game for two players.

Fight For Life is the story of eight people trapped in hell who have been given the chance at reincarnation. After winning the tournament and defeating the devil's son, you will be returned to life.

The game does have some good looking graphics. The polygon characters are somewhat blocky, but the tex-mapping is well done. Background graphics are nicely done, but the floor definately leaves something to be desired. Thankfully, the animation moves along at a brisk pace, and the special moves are fun to watch. And all I'm going to say about the sounds are that... They're corny.

Gameplay, to be blunt, is boring. Some matches last longer than 6 minutes because of the minimal damage each hit causes. Long matches are different, but they make the game dull. I personally spend most of my time toying with the replay mode. After pausing the game, you can rewind the last few seconds, move around the ring, and even zoom in on the characters. This is truly something unique about a game that certainly needs the help.

Almost two years were spent working on this game's playability. Which makes me wonder, what happened? Simply shortening the round length would have helped considerably. Unless you're looking for a cart to show off the Jag's polygon and tex-mapping abilities, stay away from **Fight For Life**.

Profile Atarian : Tony Greenwood

How many of us started out with a Spectrum 128+? Most I would think. Actually mine was a present for my son. I had to get involved with it in order to be able to get the games to actually run. Then on a boring day while he was at school I tried the built in BASIC programming language. I have never looked back <smile>.

The need for more power and especialy better data access meant an upgrade of hardware. I came very close to buying a Sam Coupe computer that was supposed to be the succesor to my beloved Speccy. I have to wonder weather the constant advertising of more powerful computers in all the Spectrum magazines didn't help to its early downfall. The Spectrum had to go, but maybe it was hurried along?

The best computer for me, especialy by price, was of course the Atari. I was instantly amazed at this sudden new power. The speed of loading from a disk drive was incredible compared to the tapes I was used to. The rest of my house was happy at the upgrade because of the superior games we now had access to, and after having my appetite wetted I couldn't wait to try out the **First BASIC** package that came with it. This wasn't too difficult as I already new the fundamentals, but then I found out the price of upgrading that software

in order to make a compiled program and that put the stoppers on it all.

Then came *Atari ST User* magazine with a free copy of **STOS BASIC**. Wow! This was good. Less than a year later I had placed an advert in this same magazine for like minded STOS user contacts and I received a very lot of replies. I came up with the idea to start a Disk magazine for STOS users and I made the very first issue by March 1993.

Unbelievably it got stronger, attracted more people, and lasted a lot longer than expected. 26 issues of *STOSSER* diskzine and another one is being produced. *STOSSER* may well go on forever.

It was apparent that programs released by a software name were better received than those released by someones name (eg "Released by SEGA" looks better than "Released by Joe Bloggs"). Therefore, *STOSSER* software was born. Choosing that name as it was already well known through the Diskzine and it was mine to use.

I will always have my Atari no matter what happens. And as long as I can, I will try to produce some decent software with it.

<http://www.airtime.co.uk/users/stosser>

Programmer of 50+ titles, Including **Heartland**, **HERO**, and **Island Strike** for the Atari ST.

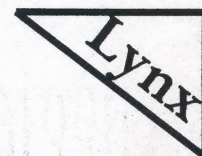
Fight For Life
By: Atari
For: Jaguar
Type: Polygon Fighter

Graphics: 85%
Sound/Music: 70%
Gameplay: 55%
Overall: 73%

Hardware:
2.5meg STe -

European Jaguar -
American Jaguar -

Favorite Games
Sensible Soccer &
Cannon Fodder
Tempest 2000 &
Iron Soldier



BattleZone 2000: The Real Deal

By Greg George

For those of you who own a Lynx and a copy of BattleZone 2000, you're definately in for a treat! By pressing OPTION 1 on the tank configuration screen three times and pressing RESTART, you can access the true BZ2000 game as it was meant to be! This is a very complex game including solid 3D tanks and enemies, special weapons, and numerous terrains.

I can understand why Atari felt this game was too complex to be released in its natural form. Firstly, there are 2000 levels to choose from with 14 different terrains. Most of them look alike, only some unique sprites, backgrounds and palette changes, but all have different affects on your tank.

After choosing your terrain, you literally must build your tank from scratch. You pick the drive-train, motor, weapons, and radar and actually place them in special areas located on the outer part of the screen. Thankfully, this process can be made easier by using one of the 6 pre-built tanks. I prefer to ride in the Madonna, while others might

like the Borrg. (Such original names, huh?)

After the tank is built, you jump right into the Battlezone. Moving around is pretty basic but picking up items can be a little tricky. You must first press OPTION 1, move the cursor over the object, then press OPTION 2. After that, you have to find a place to put it. Sometimes, you just don't have room for more stuff in your tank and have to leave it behind.

And, if that's not enough, each item must be activated! Probably the most useful item would be the scanner which is overlayed on the main screen much like the map from ALIEN vs. Predator. After I activated it, these little black dots appeared all over the screen and I thought there was something wrong with my Lynx!

Your goal in this game is the same as the original BattleZone. Destroy the tanks. (Or in this case, the eyeballs, the jumpy things, and other weird monsters.) It takes quite a while before you can find and kill all the baddies so you can move on to the next level. And that can also be hard if you run out of

ammo! Thankfully, if you get bored you can always reset the Lynx. That will get you out of the level your on but keep all your found items.

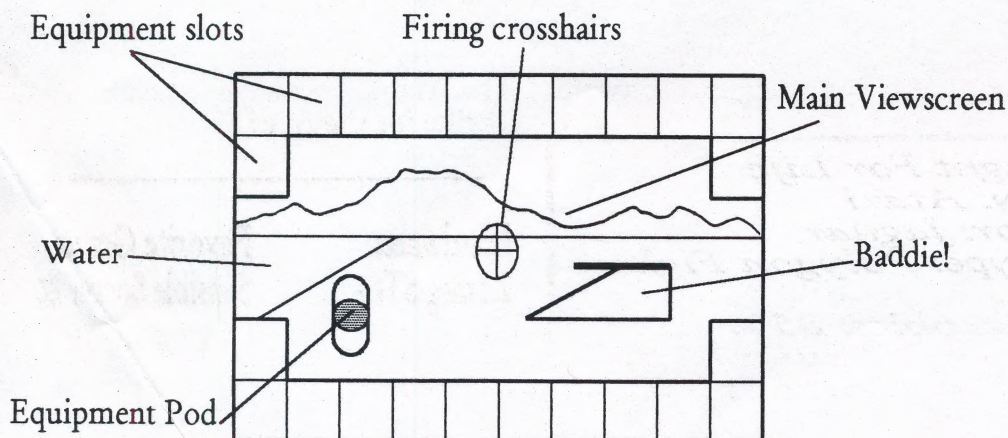
One of the first things I do is turn off the music. It's annoying and repetitive. The sound effects are the exact same as the ones from BattleZone Plus (the game you play without using the cheat). They're pretty basic, but the shot sound effect is very satisfying.

It will take weeks, if not months, to complete this game. Regardless of the time requirements, I would recomend it to all Lynx owners. Plus mode will please the quick-fix action seekers, and 2000 appeals to the more strategy oriented. Atari was definately wrong thinking no one would like 2000 mode. Heck, it's automatic for me to go through that cheat each time I power up this game!! Thanks to HandMade software, we Lynx owners have another unique game to rub in the noses of our mainstream friends!

BattleZone 2000
By: Handmade Software
For: Lynx
Type: Action

Graphics: 90%
Sound/Music: 80%
Gameplay: 85%
Overall: 90%

BattleZone 2000 Main Screen



On a totally unrelated note, my favorite baseball team, the **St. Louis Cardinals** finally won a Division Championship after 9 long years. Thanks go to manager Tony LaRussa (who I have a signed ball from!) and the great Ozzie Smith. I'm glad Ozzie, the best defensive shortstop ever, was able to retire on a happy note. He certainly deserves it.

Go Cardinals!

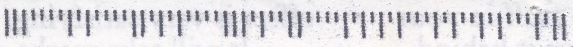
Battlezone 2000: The Real Deal

By Greg Gagne

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like the Borg. (Each original name, huh?) After the tank is built, you jump right into the Battlezone. Moving around is pretty basic but picking up items can be a little tricky. You must first press OPTION 1, move the cursor over the object, then press OPTION 2.

For those of you who own a Lynx and a copy of Battlezone 2000, you're definitely in for a treat by pressing OPTION 1 on the tank construction screen three times and pressing RESTART, you can access the true Battlezone game as it was meant to be!



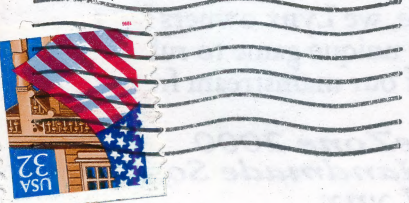
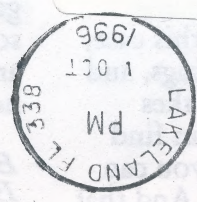
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months, to complete this game. Regardless of the time requirements, I would recommend it to all Lynx owners. Plus, it's worth the price tag for what you get. and 2000 speaks to the more strategy-oriented. And it's definitely worth having no one else have the 2000 mode. Heck, it's automatic for me to go through that each time I power up this game. I think to myself, "I'll be back!"

And if that's not enough, each item you find is activated. I probably the most useful item would be the scanner which is overlaid on the main screen much like the map from ALIEN vs. Predator. And it's not just a map, it's a real-time map.

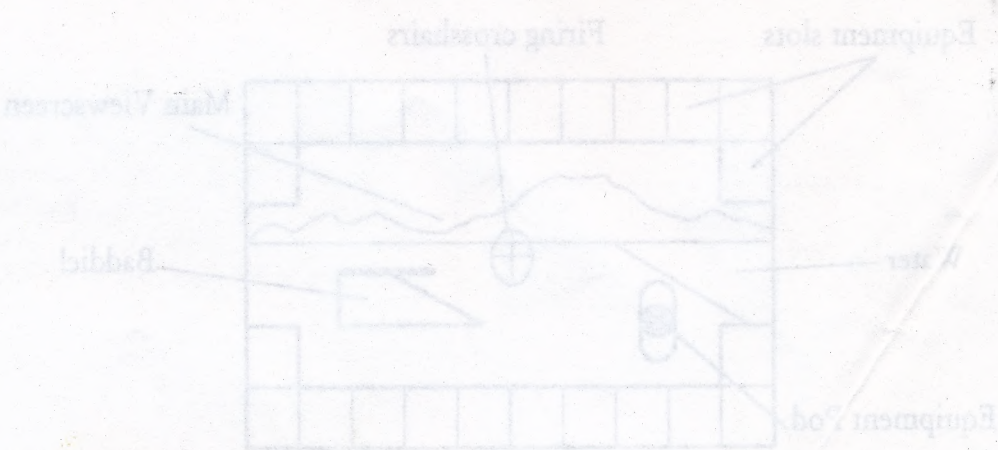
I can understand why Alan felt this game was too complex to be released in its natural form. Firstly, there are 1000 levels to choose from with 14 different terrains. Most of them look alike, only some unique colors, backgrounds and patterns change, but all have different effects on your tank.

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Graphic: 2000
Sound/Music: 2000
Gameplay: 8.5
Overall: 9.0

Battlezone 2000 Main Screen



On a totally unrelated note, my favorite baseball team, the St. Louis Cardinals finally won a Division Championship after 9 long years. Thanks go to manager Tony La Russa (who I have a signed ball from) and the great Ozzie Smith. I'm glad Ozzie, the best defensive shortstop ever, was able to retire on a happy note. He certainly deserves it.

Go Cardinals!